

I am Cephas Bowles, General Manager of non-commercial station WBGO-FM in Newark, New Jersey. WBGO is licensed to Newark Public Radio, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, and serves the New York City metropolitan area with a classic jazz format. WBGO is an affiliated station of NPR.

I write to file comments in support of HD Radio and supplemental audio channel capacity. Both will help WBGO improve its public service by providing cleaner, clearer transmission and more abundant programming to marketplace listeners.

The metro NY area is regarded as the jazz capital of the world. Jazz listeners and industry are located in this area. WBGO is the sole radio station in the market offering a 24-hour classic jazz service. If it is occurring in the world of jazz, WBGO is somehow involved. This position makes the station very important to the survival of jazz in NY City.

HD Radio's improved sound quality and elimination of distorting interference are important factors that will motivate us to transition to digital broadcasting, if all goes well, during the fall of 2004. We believe that HD Radio will allow listeners, many of whom are people of color, to receive our signal who, heretofore, have advised us that they have been unable to receive the signal clearly. This will help WBGO and, more importantly, the jazz industry based in the metro area.

The supplemental audio channel will enable WBGO to expand the scope of its programming. As I file these comments, the WBGO Board of Trustees and staff are engaged in strategic planning to determine future growth areas for the station. Expanded service, via the supplemental audio channel, may include programming for the Latino community. Again, while we have not reached conclusion on this point, we believe that the availability of the supplemental audio option is important to enhancing the quality of the public service that non-commercial radio in general, and WBGO, in particular, value and provide. Importantly, WBGO boasts one of radio's most diverse audiences. We understand the important role that radio plays in these communities. HD Radio will enable us to serve these communities with cleaner, clearer signals. It will also allow these communities access to information and culturally-enriching entertainment that might otherwise not be available via radio. We strive to serve listener interests.

Supplemental audio will enable smaller stations to provide multiple streams of programming that, prior to this technology, were possible only with the purchase of a second station (which was a very expensive, albeit unaffordable, option).

As commercial radio consolidates and becomes less willing to serve the many interests held by the audience, public radio is stepping forward to provide less mass-appeal but financially sustainable programming options.

We appreciate the Commission's interest in allowing us maximum flexibility to serve the needs and interests of our listeners. As you know, public radio has an exemplary record of public service. This new technology will also expand our work in this area. Enhanced programming and possible revenue-generating capabilities all exist via the supplemental audio channel. WBGO also shares a mission with its sister non-commercial stations to serve the public's educational needs.

Newark Public Radio is a firm believer that HD Radio and the supplemental audio capability will benefit all communities and make it possible to expand our public service.

Thank you for the opportunity to file these comments.

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